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November 9, 1900

BAHAMA ISLANDS.

Report of yellow fever in Nassau, New Providence, during the past twenty years, with a description of the harbor.

[Reply to Department circular letter, August 24, 1900.]

NASSAU, NEW PROVIDENCE. October 10, 1900.

In response to dispatch No. 28, dated August 30, 1900, inclosing copy of a letter from the Treasury Department, on the subject of yellow fever in Nassau, New Providence, and the harbor, I would respectfully report as follows:

The harbor of Nassau is made by a low coral islet, called Hog Island, which runs parallel with the mainland for a distance of 2 miles, opposite the city of Nassau, and at an average distance of half a mile from it. The harbor is thus about 2 miles long and for most of that distance its average width is half a mile. It runs east and west, having an entrance at both ends. The western or main entrance is over a bar, where, at high tide, are about 20 feet of water.

The eastern entrance is more shallow permitting the entry of vessels drawing 9 or 10 feet. Large vessels lie outside the bar. The depth of water in the harbor varies from 6 to 40 feet. Toward the eastern entrance a long low islet called Potter's Cay runs midway down the harbor and between it and the mainland is a favorite anchorage for small island vessels and boats. There is also a narrow sand bank running along the middle of the harbor at its western end, covered at low tide by 7 to 10 feet of water, with deeper channels on either side. This is an obstruction to navigation. The principal landing places and wharves are situated on the southern side of the harbor at its western end, where small steamers and large sailing vessels load and discharge their cargoes.

Several large sewers discharge along this portion of the harbor, but their pollution of the water is scarcely noticeable at any time, since there are 2 strong tides running through the harbor daily, which carry all the sewage promptly and effectively out to sea, leaving the water substantially uncontaminated and remarkably pure. It is not considered that any vessels are liable in the slightest degree to become infected with yellow fever by anchoring in any part of the harbor. There can not be said to be any stagnant water in the harbor, the ebb and flow of the tides keeping it in motion most of the time.

The prevailing winds are north and northeasterly in the winter, and south and southeasterly during the summer months.

No plans have ever been put into operation or even considered for any improvement of the sanitary condition of the harbor of Nassau, which is deemed by the health authorities to be in an excellent state of healthfulness. I can not find any record of any vessel ever infected by yellow fever from the condition of the water of the harbor. This being the case, I have omitted sending a diagram of the harbor, since it was requested simply to show those portions where vessels were most likely to become affected with yellow fever.

I do not know that any new measures of municipal sanitation have been taken during the last twenty years which would have an effect upon the prevalence of yellow fever. A good condition of sanitation has prevailed for many years, and the board of health has always been vigilant in enforcing sanitary measures. I doubt if there is a cleaner, better kept town in the West Indies than Nassau, New Providence. A sanitary inspector is on duty constantly, with assistants who look care-

fully after health matters. The island is divided into a number of districts, each of which has its overseer. The sanitary condition of the city is such that the health authorities do not believe yellow fever can prevail here except by importation from some foreign port, and most rigid quarantine is enforced to prevent such a result.

The quarantine regulations are simple, but rigid. In May of each year the governor in council issues a proclamation declaring all other West Indian and Gulf ports to be infected up to November 1, including Florida ports as far north as Miami. Any vessel arriving from any such ports is placed in quarantine for fourteen days, even though she has no sickness on board and has a clean bill of health.

As to all other ports the health officer on board an arriving vessel, decides the question of quarantine himself, or refers it to the board of health. Northern ports are never quarantined unless for a special reason. There is a fine and well equipped quarantine station on Athol Island, 3 miles from the city. These regulations have been in operation for many years.

I do not think there has been any change in particular during the last twenty years in the commerce with ports where yellow fever is endemic.

I do not regard Nassau as a port where yellow fever is endemic; that is, it does not originate or develop here. There has not been a case of yellow fever in this port for over twenty years. The last cases we had occurred in the summer of 1880, and it was stated by the authorities here at that time that the fever was brought by a vessel arriving from a foreign port. It was not a bad visitation, something like 30 or 40 deaths occurring, a peculiarity of it being the number of children who died from the disease.

I believe the foregoing will meet the requirements of the Treasury Department, but if additional information be needed I will take great pleasure in forwarding it.

THOS. J. McLAIN,
United States Consul.

BARBADOS.

Report on the harbor and sanitary condition with reference to yellow fever.

[Reply to Department circular letter of August 24, 1900.]

BARBADOS, WEST INDIES, *September 22, 1900.*

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the Department's unnumbered dispatch of August 30 with inclosure from the Treasury Department.

Herewith inclosed I have the honor to forward a rough chart of the harbor of this place, and of the inner harbor locally known as the Careenage, which I have prepared, showing the location of the various sewers and drains of the city of Bridgetown, as far as I have been able to ascertain them. Under separate cover I also forward a copy of the quarantine laws and regulations of this island, from which I deemed the Department would be able to gather more information than from any bare details I may be able to furnish.

The sanitation of this island is under the control of several departments. First of which may be mentioned the board of health and quarantine board, which control the shipping and quarantine regulations of the island, and all the local government institutions. They also control the government medical officers whose duty it is to inspect every